

# **Public Health Advisory Committee**

Preventing Childhood Lead Poisoning  
in Minneapolis

November 19, 2020

# Childhood lead poisoning

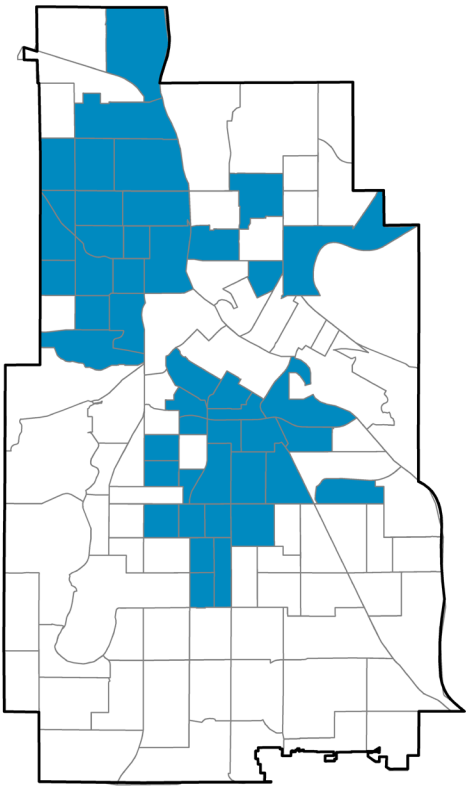
294 Minneapolis children have been poisoned by lead over the last 3 years

# **The effects of childhood lead poisoning on children's brains are devastating**

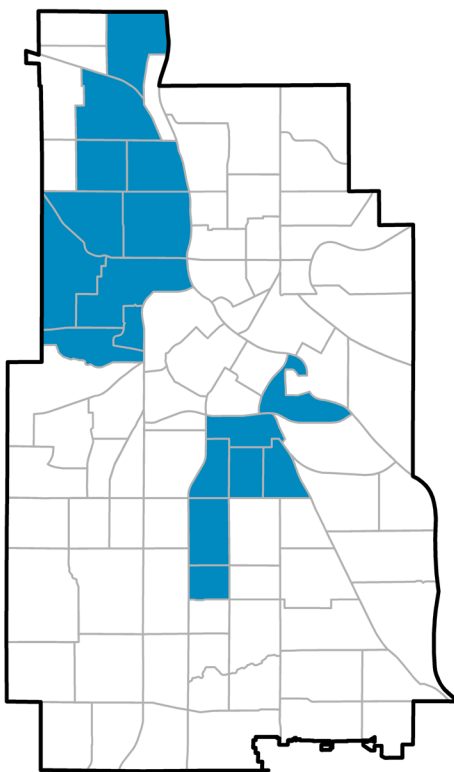
- Reduced IQ
- Decreased cognitive functioning
- Reduced educational attainment
- Increased antisocial behavior

# Childhood lead poisoning disproportionately affects black, indigenous and other children of color

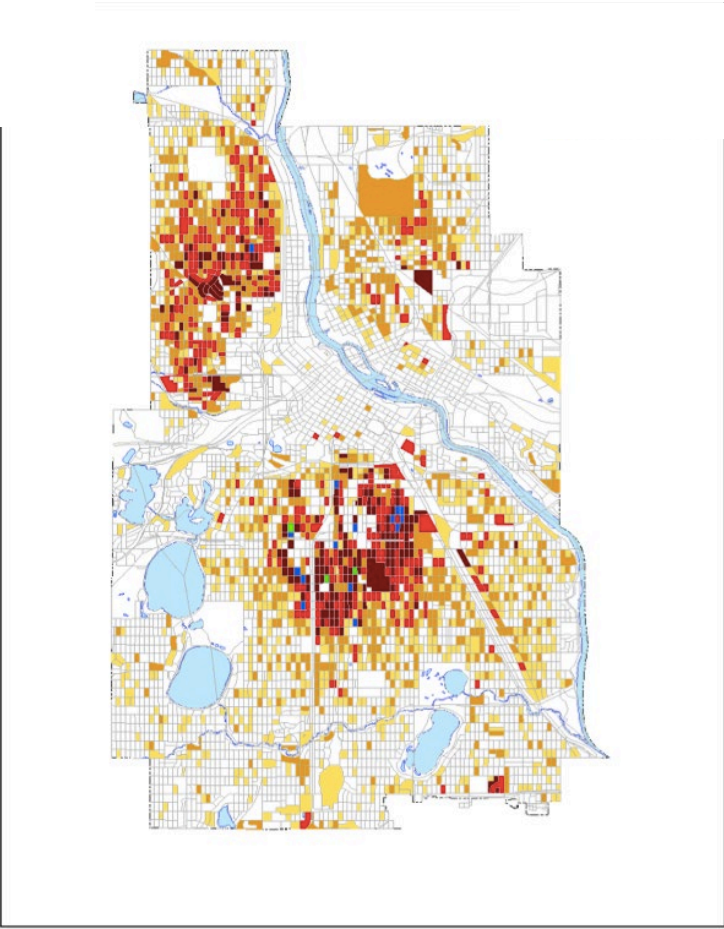
**<185% Poverty Level  
2017**



**>60% People of Color  
2017**



**Elevated Blood Lead Levels  
1999-2014**



# **We can solve the problem of childhood lead poisoning**

- We know the cause: exposure to deteriorated lead-based paint in older housing
- We know how to identify deteriorated lead-based paint
- We know how to remove or mitigate deteriorated lead-based paint



# **Guideline for accelerating efforts to prevent childhood lead poisoning in Minneapolis**

Public Health Advisory Committee

Effects of childhood lead poisoning (Elevated Blood Lead level,  
EBL >5 ug/dl)

- **Serious and consequential**
- **Irreversible**
- **Entirely Preventable**

# Limitations the PHAC proposal addresses

## Intervening too late

We are reacting to poisonings (EBLs) that have already occurred rather than preventing them

## Taking too long

At the current rate of inspections and remediations, it will take decades to eliminate lead exposure hazards from just the highest risk housing



# Proposed Strategy

## **Build on a successful model**

Can expand the Minneapolis Health Department's existing and highly effective lead programs to meaningfully accelerate efforts to eliminate lead hazards

## **Address the critical need**

The City currently has no requirement to inspect or identify lead hazards in housing, or a mechanism for doing this

Ability to inspect high-risk housing is essential to enable identifying and eliminating lead hazards

# Scope of the problem

- Lead added to paint for centuries to improve density, coverage, durability
- Danger to children recognized since 1800s
  - League of Nations recommended banning lead paint in 1921
- Use of lead in paint fiercely defended by industry
- Lead content in indoor paint first regulated in U.S. in 1978
- Legacy is that **half of all Twin Cities homes** are presumed to contain lead-based paint

# Building Age



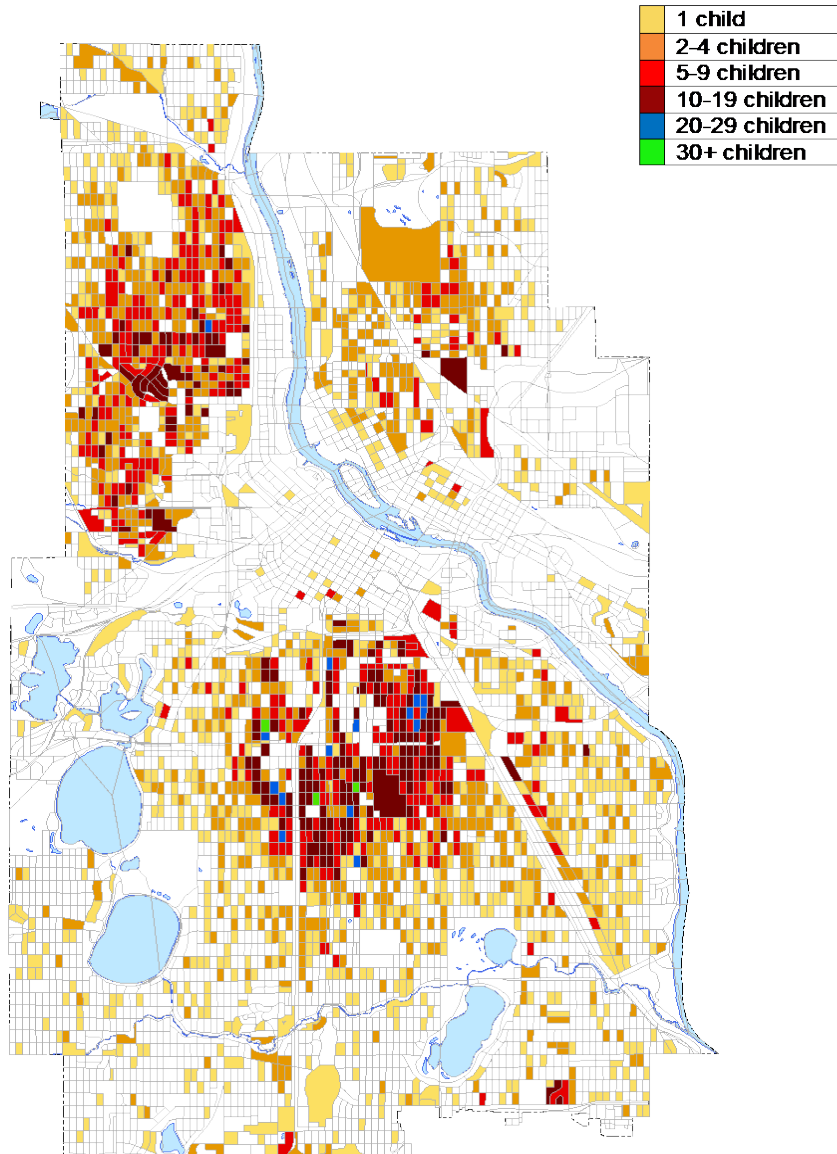
# Identifying high-risk housing

## Location

### Neighborhoods

Central  
Jordan  
Phillips  
Powderhorn  
Ventura Village

Primarily rental units



# Licensed rental units in Minneapolis

<b><u>Building Age</u></b>	<b><u>Entire city</u></b>	<b><u>5 highest risk neighborhoods</u></b>
All	94,000	9,473
Pre 1978	71,000	7,500
Pre-1930	38,000	<b>5,100</b>

# Current Health Department Focus

- Address the most immediate need:
  - Identify children with **elevated blood lead level** (EBL >5 ug/dl)
- Inspect housing
- Identify sources of lead exposure
- Work with property owners to arrange remediation
  - Identify grant funding to defray the cost
  - Assist in hiring contractors
  - Assure that the work has been completed

# Lead hazard remediation

**Most common source** of lead exposure in Minneapolis is windows and frames

Chips, flakes, dust from peeling or worn painted surfaces  
Some can be painted over, then maintained by landlord  
Permanent solution is replacement of window and frame  
Usually accomplished in 1-2 days  
Does not require temporary housing

**Cost** depends on extent of work needed

Generally about half can be covered by grants  
Building owner cooperation is good

# How long will this take?

Of the 5,100 highest risk rental units

- Not all have lead hazards

- Some have already been inspected and remediated

- Some can have surfaces painted over

If **approximately** half of the units need full remediation:

- About 850 full remediations need yearly to reach all units over **3 years**

- In 2019, the Health Department oversaw remediation of 175 units (triggered by EBLs)

- At current rate it would take **15 years** to reach just these highest risk units



# A shift to Preventive Inspections

## Current Health Department responsibility

**EBL** → Inspect → Evaluate options → Remediation

## Proposed shared responsibility

**Inspect** → **Screen/refer** → Inspect → Evaluate options → Remediate

Regulatory Services  
Department

Health Department

**Peeling or worn paint in a pre-1930 home  
is presumed to contain lead**



# Shared responsibility for housing hazards

## Regulatory Services Department

Consider lead-based paint a safety hazard like  
gas, electric, plumbing, construction

Prioritize and inspect high-risk units, flag peeling  
or worn paint

## Health Department

Act on rental units flagged by Housing Inspections  
Evaluate and arrange remediation

# Shared responsibility for housing hazards

## Regulatory Services Department

Consider lead-based paint a safety hazard like  
gas, electric, plumbing, construction  
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## Health Department

Act on rental units flagged by Housing Inspections  
Evaluate and arrange remediation

## Shared Position

to enable  
preventive  
inspections

# What the PHAC asks of the City Council

**Establish a comprehensive plan** to substantially accelerate efforts to prevent lead poisoning, including as key features:

- Moving to a primary prevention model
- Enabling a partnership between the Health and Regulatory Services Departments
- Setting measurable goals to allow program assessment

**Prioritize moving forward with the shared Health and Housing Coordinator position**

# Looking Ahead

- 71,000 pre-1978 rental units in Minneapolis
- Current proposal targets 5,100 of the highest risk units = **7%**
- If effective, expand in a stepwise fashion
  - Rapidly deal with the highest risk housing
  - Serve as a pilot program

# Thank you!

- We stand for questions
- The Public Health Advisory Committee meets the 4<sup>th</sup> Tuesday of each month (except December) from 6-8 p.m.
- For more information on Boards and Commissions, visit the City's website:  
<http://www2.minneapolismn.gov/boards/index.htm>